Chapter 1: Argentina, the pride of a Progressive Country

Is the worst country also the most chosen?

Argentina has historically been one of Latin America's main destinations for migration,being the destination for 80 percent of all intra-South American migration in the 20th century. According to the 2022 Census, almost 2 million foreign-born residents live in the country, the vast majority coming from neighboring Latin American nations. This was not an accident: since the nineteenth century, Argentina's Constitution has promoted immigration and established that foreigners living in the country enjoy the same civil rights as Argentine citizens, as written in 1853 Argentina is “for everybody in the world that wishes to inhabit Argentine soil”[1].Thiis sentiment is reflected in public opinion: In 2024, Latinometrics found that **Argentina had one of the most positive attitudes toward immigration in South America**, ranking second only to Venezuela in terms of the **lowest percentage of people who viewed immigration as harmful.**[2]

Argentina built part of its national identity around the idea that education, healthcare, and social mobility should not be privileges reserved for those with wealth or nationality, but social rights accessible to those who live within its territory[3]. This principle is deeply rooted in Argentina's history: the 1853 Constitution encouraged immigration and recognized rights for "all inhabitants" of the nation, while later movements such as the 1918 University Reform and the 1949 establishment of free university education transformed access to knowledge into a pillar of Argentine social mobility[4]. Argentina created institutions powerful enough that even people from wealthier countries came here because they offered opportunities they could not access at home.

This philosophy is reflected in one of the strongest public education systems in Latin America. The University of Buenos Aires (UBA), a tuition-free public university, has once again been ranked as the best university in Latin America by the QS World University Rankings. For decades, thousands of students from across the continent have moved to Argentina to study there, while the public healthcare system has also provided assistance to anyone who requires it, regardless of their nationality.[5]

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[1] Constitution of the Argentine Nation.

[2] Where is immigration feared most in Latam?

[3] The 70th anniversary of the establishment of tuition-free university education in Argentina.

[4] Simplified National Constitution of Argentina.

[5] Latin America’s top university is not in Brazil or Mexico: students can study there for free.

These institutions became symbols of a model of society: one based on universal access rather than exclusion.

However, the current wave of hostility towards Argentina is putting these principles under pressure. While many Argentines themselves are victims of the economic and political decisions of the current government, online hostility and accusations directed at the entire country are starting to be used as justification by Milei's government and his lobby for restricting the rights of immigrants: As of July 21st of 2026, **the president of the ruling party's block in the BSAS Provincial Senate presented a proposal to charge foreign residents for public healthcare and education in responde to the online Anti-Argentine sentiments from neighboring countries, arguing that University and Healthcare should be "by Argentines and for Argentines".**

The danger is not only the specific policy itself, but the logic behind it. When social rights begin to be defined by nationality rather than by human dignity, one of the foundations of Argentina's historical identity starts being questioned. We can't let nationality or economic status be the deciding factor on the right to education in our country.

What is happening in Argentina should therefore matter beyond its borders. The global left cannot ignore the consequences of alienating the societies it claims to support. When complex political realities are reduced to stereotypes, when entire populations are judged through the actions of a government they did not all choose, and when solidarity becomes conditional, the result is not more internationalism. It is the strengthening of nationalist movements that were previously unable to gain this level of legitimacy.

Argentina may be the first example of this fracture, but it will not necessarily be the last.

The Argentina Beyond the Stereotypes

Argentina has historically been one of the strongest centers of progressive social movements in South America, often setting precedents that later influenced debates across the continent. Its political identity has been deeply shaped by struggles for human rights, social justice, and equality.

Argentina became the first country in Latin America to legalize same-sex marriage in 2010, becoming a regional and international reference for LGBTQ+ rights.

It is also a pioneer in gender identity rights. Its Gender Identity Law, approved in 2012, was the first one of its kind in the world, considered for years one of the most advanced legislation because it did not require a medical diagnosis, gender-affirming surgery, or judicial

authorization. **Instead, it recognized gender identity as a matter of personal self-determination.**

Argentina has also built one of the most influential feminist movements in Latin America. Movements such as **Ni Una Menos**[6], born in Argentina in 2015 as a response to gender-based violence and femicides, quickly expanded throughout Latin America and inspired activists around the world. **The Green Wave (Marea Verde)**[7] first rose to prominence in the streets of Argentina and became one of the most relevant feminist movements of the 21st century in Latin America, **leading the fight for reproductive rights and eventually achieving the legalization of abortion in Argentina in 2020.**

The country's human rights movements have also had global influence. **The Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo**[8] are internationally recognized organizations for their fight against forced disappearances during Argentina's military dictatorship and for recovering the identities of children who were illegally taken from their families by the regime.

This history is essential to understand why Argentina has also maintained a strong tradition of international solidarity.

The Palestinian flag, in particular, has been a constant presence in Argentine social movements among left-wing organizations, which have historically been one of the strongest political forces in the streets of Argentina.
The flag has appeared during protests against economic inequality, during feminist mobilizations such as **8M**, and during **the March of March 24th**, when millions gather to commemorate the victims of Argentina's last military dictatorship and demand justice for those who were disappeared by military forces. **Most of the protests on Argentine streets will see the Palestine flag wave** despite not being related to the focus of the protest. Protests against Milei will always include the Palestine flag and Argentina has also hosted protests in favor of international issues, such as the **protest to demand freedom for Anasse Kazib, a French activist who faced legal persecution by the French government after expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people and denouncing the war in Gaza. Palestine flags can also be seen outside of the Argentine Congress Building and near relevant political buildings throughout Argentina's territory.**

[6] Ten years of Ni Una Menos: How one tweet led to a global phenomenon.

[7] This reproductive rights movement has united activists across Latin America to fight for—and win—expanded access to abortion.

[8] Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.

This longstanding solidarity is not surprising, considering Argentina officially recognized Palestine as a "free and independent state" back in 2010, more than 13 years before Spain formally recognized the state of Palestine, amongst other European countries.

But solidarity has not been limited to distant causes: **during Bolivia's political crisis, Argentine organizations, unions, and members of the Bolivian community in Argentina marched in Buenos Aires towards the Bolivian Embassy to protest the state of exception declared by the Bolivian government and express support for the Bolivian people.**

As well as during the World Cup, where the global scrutiny was furthering its hatred towards Argentina, videos surfaced of Argentine people waving Palestine flags and claiming that "if you're a real Argentine, you support Palestine".

Argentina's relationship with human rights is not merely symbolic. After the dictatorship that ruled the country between 1976 and 1983[9] Argentina proved that **a democracy can try its own dictators**[10], and became **one of the few countries in the world to prosecute its own military leaders through civilian courts.** The Trial of the Juntas in 1985 condemned members of the military dictatorship responsible for crimes against humanity, establishing a historic precedent for transitional justice. The memory of state violence, disappearances, and repression became a central part of Argentine political identity. **For many Argentines, international solidarity is not seen as separate from national struggles. The same movements that fight for human rights inside Argentina have historically connected their struggles with broader global causes.**

However, many Argentine activists and local progressive movements who continue supporting international causes such as Palestine now find themselves facing an unexpected alienation: not because they have abandoned their principles, but because they feel abandoned by the same international movements they believed would stand beside them.

Many expected international progressive movements to recognize **Argentina's own history: a country resisting the rise of Milei, defending public institutions, fighting against authoritarianism, and confronting a government increasingly aligned with Israel and far-right international actors**.

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[9] Argentina's Dictatorship Story.

[10] How Argentina Proved a Democracy Can Try Its Own Dictators.

Online discussions often reduce an entire population to simplified stereotypes, treating Argentines as collectively responsible for the actions of a government that many of them actively oppose. **Being Argentine becomes interpreted as a political position rather than an identity shaped by a complex history of immigration, social struggles, dictatorship, resistance, and human rights movements.**

The consequence is not that Argentines stop caring about global struggles. The Palestinian flag will continue to appear in Argentine protests, and solidarity remains strong. The problem is that many people who once saw international progressive movements on the online sphere as natural allies are beginning to feel that those movements no longer see them as partners, but as an enemy to be educated or condemned.

This process is no longer confined to online discourse. It is beginning to shape how ordinary Argentines are perceived and treated abroad. What starts as memes, stereotypes, or viral accusations can gradually normalize hostility against an entire nationality.

Context becomes unnecessary; nationality alone becomes enough. Ring a bell?

Argentine immigrants have reported harassment at work, public humiliation, and even physical assaults following the World Cup, and some local incidents have been registered as well.

● **A Dutch retail company published promotional content mocking Argentines as a nationality during the peak of anti-Argentine sentiment following the 2026 World Cup.**

● **Samuel Jackson, a public figure with millions of followers described Argentina as "the most racist country in the world," reinforcing a generalized stereotype about an entire nation. Afro-Argentines especially have felt aggravated by this type of commentaries from famous and non-famous people alike, who are flooding the internet with the message that there are no black people in Argentina. The argument from the Black Argentine population is that these types of claims erase their identity as an Argentine POC. Zoé Gerbaduo, an Afro-Argentine explains her own take on racism in Argentina and laments Samuel Jackson's ignorant take, as explained on Buenos Aires Herald. She says: *"Before putting a label on an entire country, it is worth understanding its context, its history, and the experiences of those who live that reality. No country is perfect, but neither can it be reduced to stereotypes."***

● **Argentine citizen Paulo Javier was brutally assaulted in Mexico after the World Cup while wearing an Argentina jersey, suffering multiple facial fractures after being attacked by a group of more than ten people.**

● **An Argentine waiter living in Spain was physically assaulted after Argentina's defeat in the 2026 World Cup.**

● **Videos circulated online showing Spanish fans performing Nazi salutes in front of Argentines, using dangerous phrases such as "colonizing again", Argentines receiving harassment on the streets just for wearing the Argentine jersey. .**

● **Spanish supporters displayed banners reading "The Falklands are Spanish," mocking one of Argentina's most emotionally sensitive historical sovereignty disputes.**

● **A Brazilian man stabbed three Argentine citizens in the city of Bernardo de Irigoyen, located on the border with Brazil, amid celebrations following Argentina's World Cup defeat.**

There is much more that could have been included. The goal is not to portray Argentina as a victim, but to show the part of the story that is not going viral.

Argentina may represent only the beginning of a larger rupture. When political movements stop recognizing the histories and identities of the communities that support them, they risk creating the very isolation that benefits the most powerful actors. Solidarity cannot survive without mutual recognition: supporting Palestine, defending human rights, and opposing imperialism should never require denying the history and struggles of the people standing beside you.

What about football?

One of the criticisms against Argentina has been the behavior displayed at the end of the Final match in this World Cup, where the player Paredes was seen starting a physical altercation with a Spanish player. Whereas the Spanish team has taken a more tolerant position, Gavi, the Spanish counterpart in the conflict, stated that "he (Paredes) shouldn't be sanctioned, this is part of football. I understand that it might not be a good example for children, but in the end, it's all football and it has to be this way"[11] arguing that this type of intense rivalry is part of the game.

Argentine fans, on the other hand, were more condemning when asked their opinion about Paredes' behavior[12]: "A national shame, he must never be part of the Argentine team again," "A shame, requires immediate replacement, we have more than enough talent to spare; what we don't have to spare are people with manners like Messi," and "An idiot, but at the end of the day people celebrate the team in general, not Paredes' case on its own."

The problem with the international scrutiny lies in the attempt to reduce an entire country to the bad behavior of a few individuals. Despite representing Argentina on the national team, one player's actions cannot become a definition of an entire society. If we applied the same standard everywhere, the reputation of a country would constantly be determined by the actions of its most controversial representatives: From athletes to **politicians**.

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[11] Gavi spoke about Paredes' aggression in the World Cup final and whether he should be suspended by FIFA.

[12] What do Argentines think of Paredes after the final?

Argentines have been receiving harassment, being called “animals,” and even facing acts of violence because of the behavior of members of the national team. The question is whether this standard would be considered fair if the worst representatives of any other country were used as the definition of millions of ordinary people. A person’s nationality should not become a justification to dehumanize an entire population.

Las Malvinas son Argentinas: A wound that never closed

To understand Argentina's relationship with sovereignty, colonialism, and international politics, it is impossible to ignore the question of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas). For Argentines, Malvinas is not simply a territorial dispute. It is a deeply emotional issue connected to national memory, colonial history, and the lives of those who were sent to war.

For many people outside Argentina, the phrase “Las Malvinas son argentinas” can be difficult to understand. It is often interpreted as a purely nationalist claim over a territory whose current population identifies as British. However, within Argentina, the phrase carries a much deeper historical and emotional meaning.

The conflict between England and Argentina for the Malvinas/Falkland Islands started on April 2nd of 1982, but the Argentine wish to regain sovereignty over the territory predates this.The Dictatorship at charge of Argentina at the time initiated the conflict because it was desperately seeking public support and attempting to distract from its own crimes and loss of legitimacy. This is precisely why the strategy worked: the dictatorship understood that Malvinas represented a deeply rooted historical and emotional issue for Argentines.

The soldiers who were sent to the islands were mostly young conscripts, where 70% of the total of conscripts was under 25 years old and almost 40% were younger than 20 years of age[13], from humble origins and sent into a war they did not choose under the pretense of being national heroes. Many of them were poorly equipped and misled by a dictatorship. Their remembrance is incredibly important for Argentina, and it is not a celebration of the war itself, but a recognition of the human cost paid by an entire generation.

Malvinas’ claim is not about expansion; it is a claim for recognition of loss and a way to remind the world that Argentines have not forgotten what happened. It represents the belief that the concept of freedom must always be defended, in this case through the lens of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, rejecting the way the Malvinas were taken by the British Crown.

Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister during the conflict, remains a deeply controversial and rejected figure in Argentina not only because of the war itself, but also because she personally approved the attack on the ARA General Belgrano. The Argentine cruiser was outside the British exclusion zone when it was sunk, an event that remains highly controversial and is considered by many Argentines to have constituted a war crime. More than 300 young

[13] Malvinas War: 70% of Argentine conscripts were under 25 years old.

Argentine soldiers were killed in that attack, almost half of Argentina's total military deaths during the entire conflict, a number that reaches 649 Argentine soldiers against 255 on the British side.

The phrase "Las Malvinas son argentinas" therefore carries a meaning that goes beyond territory. For Argentines, it is a phrase about memory: remembering the young conscripts who were sent to die, remembering the colonial history behind the dispute, and demanding that their loss is not forgotten. Malvinas is connected to a broader culture of memory. In a country where "Memoria, Verdad y Justicia" (Memory, Truth and Justice) became a central principle after the last military dictatorship, remembering historical trauma is seen as a way of preserving dignity and preventing the repetition of past injustices. The remembrance of Malvinas follows this same emotional logic: not as a celebration of war, but as a way of honoring those who suffered and keeping alive a wound that many Argentines believe remains unresolved.

This is why Argentines who support the sovereignty claim also support Palestinian rights, Indigenous rights, and movements against foreign intervention. Lifting the Malvinas phrase in a flag is not an act of entitlement, but an **act of rebellion against Imperialism, it's seen as a claim from the poor and the oppressed, and to revindicate all those young conscripts lost for an Argentine cause under the orders of a Dictatorship.**

Historically, this interpretation has also existed among Argentine left-wing movements, including socialist and anti-imperialist organizations that opposed the military dictatorship. In fact, Argentine leftist movements, including Marxist and Trotskyist organizations, developed their own debates about whether supporting the sovereignty claim against Britain could coexist with opposition to the military dictatorship.[14] *For these sectors, defending the Argentine sovereignty claim did not mean supporting the Junta Militar, but rather distinguishing between the actions of a dictatorship and what they considered a legitimate anti-colonial question.*

The phrase "Las Malvinas son argentinas" is therefore not understood domestically as "we want to erase the islanders", but as a symbol against colonial power and the historical consequences of imperial intervention.[15]

The flag that the Argentine football team waved on the field during the 2026 World

[14] The communists are not subversive: The Communist Party and the Argentine Military Dictatorship.

[15] From the 'civil-military convergence' to the 'revolutionary shift': The crisis of the Communist Party during the 1980s.

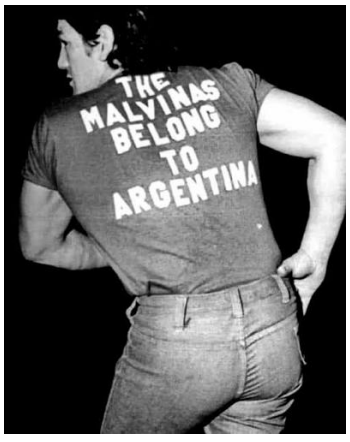
Cup is reminiscent of the banner that Maradona and the Argentine team displayed in 1982 at Camp Nou. At that time, the military regime ruling Argentina controlled the media and manipulated public perception, leading many Argentines to believe that the country was winning the war while censorship was used to control the national sentiment.

The existence and wishes of the Falkland Islanders are one of the most complex aspects of the dispute. Many Argentines recognize that the islanders have their own identity, culture, and attachment to the United Kingdom. However, many Argentines question whether the principle of self-determination can be applied in the same way to a population established after a change of sovereignty imposed by a colonial power. From this perspective, allowing the dispute to be decided only by the current population would mean accepting that a colonial power can permanently determine the future of a disputed territory through the population established after its control.

This context makes recent international reactions especially painful for many Argentines. When symbols connected to Malvinas are dismissed as simply reactionary nationalism, many feel that a fundamental part of their historical experience is being erased.

This context is especially important when understanding recent images from the Argentine football match against England. After Argentina's victory during the World Cup, some Argentine players celebrated by raising a flag reading "Las Malvinas son argentinas." To many international observers, the gesture appeared contradictory: how could a progressive or anti-imperialist movement celebrate a territorial claim against a population that identifies as British?

However, within Argentina, the symbolism is understood differently. The gesture was not interpreted by many Argentines as hostility toward British people or a celebration of war. **Instead, it was seen as an act of historical memory and defiance against what they perceive as a remaining colonial injustice.**



This symbolism has deep roots in Argentine popular culture. In 1974, legendary Argentine boxer Oscar "Ringo" Bonavena traveled internationally wearing a shirt that read "The Malvinas are Argentine" in English, intentionally translating the message so that foreign audiences could understand his position.

For many Argentines, these symbols represent the same political tradition that opposes foreign domination elsewhere in the world. This is why the issue remains so emotionally powerful: the same country that remembers a military dictatorship, defends human rights, and supports anti-colonial movements can also maintain a historical claim over Malvinas without seeing these positions as contradictory.

Understanding Argentina requires understanding this internal logic. Malvinas is not simply a question of territory. It is about memory, colonial history, national identity, and the unresolved feeling of a country that believes part of its history remains unfinished.

Chapter 2: Argentina and the Racial Matter

Argentina is often described abroad through what it lacks: a large Black population. Yet far less attention is given to everything it built instead: one of the earliest abolitionist traditions in the region, a society shaped by successive waves of migration, pioneering human rights institutions, and one of the strongest cultures of social solidarity in Latin America. Understanding Argentina requires looking at the whole picture, not at a single demographic statistic.

Afro-Argentines, Immigration, and the Myth of the "White Argentina"

When people ask why Argentina has a smaller Black population compared to countries such as Brazil or Caribbean nations, the answer cannot be explained by a single historical event. Argentina's current demographics are the result of multiple processes that developed over more than two centuries, including slavery, independence, immigration, demographic changes, and the construction of national identity.

According to Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC), people who identify as Afro-descendants represented approximately 0.7% of the Argentine population according to the 2022 Census, an increase from 0.4% in 2010. However, this number does not represent the complete historical presence of Afro-Argentines, whose contributions have often been overlooked in national narratives.

The Mother of the Argentine Homeland was Black

During the colonial period, Argentina never received enslaved Africans on the same scale as countries such as Brazil or many Caribbean nations. Historians estimate that approximately 150,000 to 200,000 enslaved Africans arrived in the Río de la Plata region throughout the colonial period, while Brazil received several million.

This demographic difference created very different historical realities. **However, the Afro-Argentine community played an important role in the formation of the country**. Afro-Argentines participated in the British Invasions of Buenos Aires, the Wars of Independence, and the construction of the Argentine Republic.

One of the most important figures in Argentine history is **María Remedios del Valle**, an Afro-Argentine woman who fought alongside General Manuel Belgrano's Army of the North during the War of Independence. She cared for wounded soldiers, participated in battles, was captured by royalist forces, endured torture and imprisonment, escaped, and returned to continue fighting.

María Remedios del Valle is referred to as **"Mother of the Argentine Homeland"**, recognizing her courage and sacrifice. **Today, María Remedios del Valle is officially honored as one of Argentina's national heroines, has been posthumously recognized with the rank of Captain, appears on the Argentine 10,000-peso banknote, and November 8th is commemorated as the National Day of Afro-Argentines and Afro Culture.**

Honor to the great Cabral

Just like The Mother of the Argentine Homeland, **another relevant Afro-Argentine figure was Sargento Juan Bautista Cabral**, remembered in Argentine history for sacrificing his life to save General José de San Martín during the Battle of San Lorenzo. Casa Rosada (equivalent of the American White House) remembers him on his birthday, with the caption "Glory and Honor to the Sergeant Cabral !".
His story is especially relevant on Argentine education, with generations of children have grown up singing:

"¡Honor, honor al gran Cabral!" (Honour, Honour to the great Cabral!)

These figures represent a national identity built not from one single origin, but from many different histories that became part of Argentina.

Understanding Argentina requires recognizing all of these realities simultaneously: the existence of racism and exclusion, but also the contributions of Afro-Argentines, Indigenous communities, and immigrant

populations; the influence of European heritage, but also the deep connection with Latin America and its peoples.

Argentina is not defined by being "European" or "non-European". Its identity was built through centuries of migration, struggle, conflict, and cultural exchange.

Independence and the abolition of slavery

Another aspect often unknown outside Argentina is that the revolutionary governments began dismantling slavery relatively early compared to many other countries in the Americas.

In 1813, the Assembly of Year XIII approved the **Freedom of Wombs Act**, declaring that children born to enslaved mothers in Argentine territory would be born free. Although this did not immediately abolish slavery, it represented a gradual path toward abolition.

Shortly after, the same Assembly decreed that enslaved people entering Argentine territory from abroad would automatically obtain freedom. This created tensions with neighboring Brazil, where slavery remained legal, as Brazilian authorities feared enslaved people would cross the border seeking liberation.

The process continued over the following decades. The slave trade was prohibited in 1826, and the Argentine Constitution of 1853 formally abolished slavery.

Why did the Afro-Argentine population decline?

There is no single explanation for the demographic changes experienced by Afro-Argentines. Historians generally point to several interconnected factors:

- Argentina began with a much smaller enslaved population compared to countries such as Brazil.
- The abolition of the slave trade prevented the arrival of new enslaved Africans.
- Afro-Argentines participated heavily in wars and military conflicts, which affected male populations.
- Intermarriage and cultural integration gradually incorporated many Afro-Argentines into the broader population.
- The arrival of millions of European immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dramatically changed Argentina's demographic composition.

It is also important to clarify that Argentina did not develop a system of legally enforced racial segregation comparable to Jim Crow laws in the United States or apartheid in South Africa. However, the absence of formal segregation does not mean racism did not exist, or exists currently. Racial prejudice, discrimination, and the marginalization of Afro-Argentine and Indigenous communities are real parts of Argentine history.

European immigration and the complex construction of Argentine identity

The history of European immigration in Argentina is one of the most complex aspects of the country's identity.
One of the earliest examples of European settlement after independence was **Y Wladfa, the Welsh settlement in Patagonia, established in 1865**. The arrival of Welsh immigrants was part of the Argentine government's broader effort to populate sparsely inhabited territories and encourage agricultural development in regions that the state wanted to integrate economically and politically.

However, this process also existed within the global context of the nineteenth century, a period in which racial theories and ideas of European superiority were widely accepted among many political elites around the world. Argentina was not an exception. The idea of "whitening" the population (*blanqueamiento*) existed among sectors of Argentine society, who associated European ancestry with progress, civilization, and modernization.

This racial motivation should be acknowledged and criticized from a modern perspective. However, it is also important to understand the historical context: after independence, Argentina faced the challenge of building a new nation, populating low-density territories, developing agriculture and industry, and creating institutions. At that time, **many leaders looked toward European countries as models of economic and technological development. Since those countries had predominantly white populations, the ideas of modernization and European immigration became deeply intertwined with the process of demographic transformation.**

The Welsh settlers were not simply representatives of an imperial power; many arrived seeking land, religious freedom, and the preservation of their cultural identity. **During the nineteenth century, many Welsh people felt that their language, traditions, and national identity were increasingly threatened by the cultural dominance and assimilation pressures coming from the British state. Establishing a Welsh settlement in Patagonia became a way to create a community where their language and traditions could survive.**

Their arrival was therefore shaped by multiple factors: the Argentine government's desire to populate and develop Patagonia, nineteenth-century ideas about modernization and European settlement, and the Welsh community's own desire for cultural survival. Their history became part of the complex cultural diversity of Argentina.

The Italian and Spanish immigration wave

The largest transformation of Argentina's demographics, however, came later, between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the arrival of millions of European immigrants, especially from **Italy and Spain**.

Between approximately **1880 and 1930**, Argentina experienced one of the largest immigration waves in modern history. Millions of Italians and Spaniards arrived in the country, dramatically transforming Argentine society, language, food, traditions, and culture.

It is important to understand that many of these immigrants did not arrive as wealthy settlers or representatives of powerful nations. **Many were ordinary people escaping difficult conditions in their countries of origin: economic crises, poverty, unemployment, political instability, and wars.**

Italian immigration was particularly significant. Between the 1850s and the mid-twentieth century, millions of Italians migrated to Argentina, especially from regions such as Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Sicily, and Calabria. Spain also contributed millions of immigrants, particularly during periods of economic hardship and political instability.

These communities became fundamental to Argentine society. They built neighborhoods, worked in agriculture and industry, created businesses, contributed to arts and culture, and shaped the Spanish spoken in Argentina. The influence is so strong that many Argentines still refer to their grandparents as *nonno* and *nonna*, reflecting the continued presence of Italian heritage within everyday family life.

Today, a significant portion of Argentines have Italian or Spanish ancestry. Being proud of this heritage does not mean Argentina considers itself European or rejects its Latin American identity. It reflects the reality that immigration became one of the central foundations of modern Argentine society.

Recognizing this ancestry does not mean Argentina believes itself to be European or denies its Latin American identity. It reflects the reality that immigration profoundly shaped Argentine culture, from food and language to music, architecture, and social customs. Pride for one’s immigrant roots is not the same as believing those origins make someone superior.

Argentina’s relationship with Indigenous history

Recognizing European immigration does not mean denying Argentina’s Indigenous history. Indigenous communities have always been part of Argentine territory and continue to play an essential role in the country today.
Argentina’s history of nation-building also includes painful episodes involving Indigenous communities.

The **Conquest of the Desert (1878-1885)** was a military campaign led by the Argentine government to expand state control over Patagonia and other territories inhabited by Indigenous peoples such as the Mapuche, Tehuelche, and others. The campaign resulted in thousands of Indigenous deaths, displacement, imprisonment, and the loss of ancestral lands. **Today, it is widely recognized as one of the darkest chapters of Argentine history.**

Understanding Argentina’s identity requires acknowledging this contradiction: a country that promoted immigration and social mobility, while also carrying out violent campaigns against Indigenous populations and adopting racial ideas that were common in the nineteenth century.

Modern Argentina continues to debate these legacies. Indigenous rights movements remain active, particularly in defense of ancestral territories and against land dispossession.Many social movements, particularly from the left, have historically defended Indigenous communities facing land conflicts, displacement, and pressure from extractive industries. The debate over territory, natural resources, and sovereignty continues to be one of the most important political discussions in Argentina.

Chapter 3: Argentina, the Israel of South America

Israel and its flirtatious relationship with Argentina’s government

Argentina has a long history of political polarization and social division. Peronism, born from the government of Juan Domingo Perón, became one of the country's main political currents, with neoliberalism later emerging as its strongest ideological rival. Political identity in Argentina has often been deeply personal, with many citizens developing strong attachments to political leaders and movements. This phenomenon cannot be separated from Argentina's historical relationship with democracy: **after the trauma of the military dictatorship that ruled the country democratic elections became not only a mechanism of government, but a symbol of representation, hope, and the possibility of rebuilding the nation.**

After decades of economic crises, corruption scandals, and failed promises, Argentines continued to believe that the next government could finally break the cycle. Even after the 2001 economic collapse, when President Fernando de la Rúa resigned and fled the Casa Rosada (equivalent of the American White House) by helicopter following massive protests, the belief that Argentina could still recover remained deeply rooted.

Despite this, right and left wing **political elites were increasingly perceived as becoming wealthier and more disconnected from ordinary citizens, while poverty, inflation, and economic instability continued to grow. This frustration created the conditions for the rise of Javier Milei, who was elected in 2023 in the middle of one of Argentina's worst economic crises**, marked by historic inflation and a profound loss of trust in traditional political parties.

Milei's campaign was built around the promise of confronting the political establishment, making those who had benefited from corruption and state privileges pay the cost of the crisis, and returning power to ordinary Argentines.

However, the expectations that accompanied his election have increasingly collided with the reality of his administration. Argentina is now represented by a president that after being elected, has embraced a strong pro-Israel identity, describing himself as “proud of being the most Zionist president in the world”, flirting with Trump's government and getting the support of Netanyahu. As economic difficulties intensified and controversies surrounding his government grew, **Milei's public image began to deteriorate, reaching some of the highest levels of disapproval of his presidency[16].** The level of disapproval has reached 64% from his supporters and the social humor of the country has deteriorated[17].

But the current government isn't worried about local optics anymore, because the focus is no longer within the country: While the country was focused on the World Cup, the Senate debated one of Milei's most controversial projects: the so-called "Law of Inviolability of Private Property", a reform that would deepen the foreignization and concentration of Argentine land.

This effort isn’t new, Milei has already tried this before, and he was stopped. This time, we might not be as lucky.

In 2008 American rabbi Yosef Jaime Libersohn attempted to purchase approximately 200,000 hectares in Valle Hermoso, La Rioja, Argentina.
The acquisition became a national controversy after it was revealed that the territory included

[16] Milei's public approval declined, while disapproval of his administration reached a record high.

[17] EEconomic crisis and disapproval: Milei loses support between voters and libertarians.

not only agricultural land, but an entire community, schools, a church, public and private properties, and important freshwater reserves.

Eventually the Argentine government intervened and suspended the transaction in 2010. The controversy became one of the precedents considered by the Kirchner administration to introduce Rural Land Law (Law 26,737) in 2011. The legislation was created in the context of growing global concerns over land grabbing, a phenomenon that intensified after the 2008 financial crisis, when foreign governments began acquiring large areas of agricultural land in countries of the Global South.

The law established limits on foreign ownership of rural territory, including a 15% national and provincial cap on land held by foreign individuals or companies, restrictions on ownership by a single foreign nationality, and protections for territories containing important bodies of water.

Milei's administration has sought to remove these restrictions. In December 2023, the government attempted to repeal the Rural Land Law through DNU (Decree of Necessity and Urgency) 70/2023, but the measure was suspended in January 2024 after the Organization known as Center of Malvinas (Falkland) Veterans (CECIM) obtained a precautionary injunction arguing that the repeal threatened national sovereignty. After this judicial obstacle prevented the immediate repeal of the law, Milei's administration then introduced the Law of Inviolability of Private Property, which would once again eliminate many restrictions on foreign access to Argentine land. This Law is going to be debated in the Argentine Senate on August 6th, 2026.

An elaborated plot by Israel and the United States to take Argentina's resources?

Argentina is a country sitting on enormous natural wealth: some of the most productive agricultural lands in the world, strategic freshwater reserves, lithium deposits, forests, and energy resources. This abundance has made Argentine territory historically valuable for economic interests, both national and international. Therefore, the debate over land is not simply about private property; it is about sovereignty, control over strategic resources, and whether Argentina's wealth will primarily benefit the people who live on this territory or powerful economic actors seeking profit.

The proposed reform would weaken existing restrictions on foreign ownership of rural territory, allowing international capital and large corporations to acquire greater control over Argentine land and natural resources. It would also introduce faster eviction procedures, facilitate changes in land use after fires, and remove protections that currently limit the privatization of certain territories.

The consequences are particularly concerning for Indigenous communities, small farmers, and rural populations who have historically faced displacement and legal conflicts over land ownership. Critics argue that these measures risk accelerating a long-standing process of concentration, where communities that have lived and worked

on these lands for generations become increasingly vulnerable while strategic territories are transferred into the hands of large corporations and investors.

These concerns have become even stronger among sectors opposed to Milei's foreign policy, particularly due to the government's close relationship with Israel and Benjamin Netanyahu's administration, including the opening of an honorary Israeli consulate in Tierra del Fuego, a strategically significant region of Argentina's southern territory. The alignment between Milei and Netanyahu, together with the dismantling of protections over Argentine territory, reveals a broader global issue: the struggle between national sovereignty and the growing influence of transnational economic and political interests over strategic resources.

Amnesty International said it better, when talking about Milei's administration that furthered the economic crisis and commented on the confrontational rhetoric: "In various parts of the world, political leaders from countries ranging from the United States to India, Brazil to Hungary, and Turkey to the Philippines, have promoted narratives of demonization and division to gain popular support, basing their strategies, among other things, on blaming entire groups for economic, social, or security problems: women, migrants, LGBTIQ+ individuals, etc."

This is particularly relevant in a moment when Argentina is strengthening its political alignment with Israel under Milei's administration while simultaneously debating policies that could weaken national control over strategic territories and resources. The concern lies in recognizing that sovereignty depends not only on laws, but also on whether the international community recognizes the dignity and rights of the people who live on that land.

A population that is constantly portrayed as morally inferior, ignorant, or complicit becomes a population whose rights are less likely to be defended. Throughout history, external powers have often benefited when the voices of local populations are ignored and their territories are treated as resources rather than homes.

“Milei does not constitute Argentina. To reduce Argentina to its president is to reproduce a colonial logic that erases the vibrant historical and contemporary social movements, labor struggles, Indigenous resistance, feminist and queer organizing, anti-racist and anti-fascist activism, and transnational solidarity engagements that have long shaped political life in Argentina.” [18]

[18] Who Speaks for Argentina?

Essayer: WorriedBearings.